

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts: K-12 Close Reading Task

Text grade band placement: 9-10	
Text	Text Complexity Analysis
<p>Title: “The Masque of the Red Death”</p> <p>Author: Edgar Allan Poe</p> <p>Citation/Publication info: Poe, Edgar Allan. “The Masque of the Red Death.” <i>Elements of Literature Fourth Course</i>. Ed. Kylene Beers and Lee Odell. Orlando: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 2007. 494-503. Print.</p> <p>Link: http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1064/1064-h/1064-h.htm</p>	<p>Quantitative: Lexile: 1240L</p> <hr/> <p>Qualitative: Purpose: Implied, but fairly easy to infer; more theoretical than concrete</p> <p>Text Structure: Connections between some ideas or events are implicit or subtle; organization is evident and generally sequential</p> <p>Language Features: The vocabulary is particularly challenging with Tier 2 words (EX: profuse, sagacious, emanating, pervaded, tangible); contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language</p> <p>Knowledge Demands: Moderate levels of discipline-specific content knowledge; some theoretical knowledge may enhance understanding; range of recognizable ideas and challenging abstract concepts</p> <hr/> <p>Reader and Task: The text is also an allegory, combining multiple symbols to create a complex figurative level of the narrative. Readers must read closely to make these connections and therefore understand all of the dimensions of the text. Readers will also encounter complex sentence structure and difficult, archaic vocabulary that will need to be addressed for comprehension</p>
ELA Common Core Standards addressed by task	
<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a</p>	

sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9–10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.6 Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

What key insights should students take from this text?

- Mood, tone, and imagery can help a writer develop meaningful symbolism.
- Despite human efforts, death is inescapable.
- Poe uses multiple symbols to create a story that operates on the figurative level as well as the literal.

Text-Dependent Questions

Comprehension:

What is the story about?

Who is Prince Prospero and what do you know about him?

Vocabulary:

Based on context, what is a mummer? What words and phrases does Poe use to describe the mummer and what do these words mean?

Significance:

Why are all the rooms different colors?

Interpretive:

Why do the revelers cease dancing and listen to the chiming of the clock?

What is the central theme of the story? Support your answer with textual evidence.

Why does Prince Prospero call the mummer's appearance "blasphemous mockery"?

Significance:

Identify and explain an important symbol from the story.

Writing Mode	Writing Prompt
Informative/Explanatory	How does Poe use symbolism to give meaning to his story, "The Masque of the Red Death?" Choose three symbols and write an analytical essay explaining the meaning of each symbol using textual evidence. How do all three symbols work together to develop the central theme or message of the story?

Scaffolding and support for special education students, English language learners, and struggling readers:

Modeling of reading difficult text may be required for struggling students; chunking the text would also be helpful. Vocabulary support is also necessary as many of the terms are archaic. After reading a particularly difficult passage, have students record questions they have that impede their understanding and then work together to try to resolve their questions.